

amusement at the mishap depends upon the impression which his dignity and his humiliation successively make upon us : it would disappear altogether were he seriously hurt : it is not shared at all by the victim of the accident. Her father was asleep in the library : her mother was dead, so she could count upon receiving the young man alone.³⁵ Here we are suddenly taken from the idea of a siesta to that of a funeral, and, again, to the contemplation of a young woman's love affairs. It is supposed by the eminent French psychologist, M. Henri Bergson, that laughter, provoked by the ludicrous, has a purposeful value, being a means by which society corrects the abnormalities or eccentricities of individuals. But this theory does not appear to cover the ground. The question is not one of laughter, but of amusement : our laughter is only the expression of our amusement, and it is quite possible to be amused in silence.

The pleasure of gambling is no doubt associated in some degree with a desire for gain. But the typical gambler is rather prodigal than avaricious, and covetousness contributes but little to his excitement. The alternations of chance produce two strongly contrasted moods—that of winning and that of losing—and the prospects of the game arouse in imagination the changes in mood that would follow luck's vagaries. Change is thus of the essence of a gambler's pleasure : in this respect,

chance resembles the ludicrous. For the
gambler,
however, the circumstances are too
exciting to be
funny. his personal interests are at
stake. But
you may often see bystanders smile
when the
changes of luck are particularly
frequent.
Here, also, may be classed the
pleasure which
Oriental peoples take in litigation.
During the
course of a suit the imagination of the
litigants